AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE TO TEACH ESL STUDENTS

Presented to
The Graduate Program
of
Greensboro College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts in
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

by

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Mayo 2022

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Abstract

The necessity and importance of teaching through valuable and meaningful elements near the local context where the students learn and belong and elements that give students the chance to associate native and foreign cultural issues is the best way to engage with culturally responsive teaching. Exploring new strategies, being creative, and designing resources might be a productive manner to develop analytical, linguistic, and cultural competencies in culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLD). Language classes can become immense opportunities to expand knowledge and make students aware of what happens worldwide without accepting a unique point of view as the whole truth. Therefore, CLD students need to themselves to an entirely new environment. They learn a second language as a necessary tool to successfully unfold in the new cultural environment—their own cultural identity helps them perceive the novelties. This paper provides two workshops to explore the benefits of teaching under an intercultural approach. It aims to help teachers and students understand and appreciate their culture, the cultures of others and study the language to share their community's cultural beliefs and practices with people whose values and behavior are different.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to the memory of Joaquin Pinzon. Although he was my inspiration to pursue my academic dreams, he was unable to see my graduation. This is for him.

I also dedicate this project to my friends Andrea Fonseca and Jhon Mendez who have supported me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Dr. Michelle Plaisance and Professor Paula Wilder, who helped and guided me to complete this project. Thank you for allowing international teachers to grow professionally.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"The danger of a single story" is a TED talk (Technology, Entertainment, Design) that explains the consequences of only hearing about people, a place, or a situation from one point of view because people tend to accept one experience as the whole truth. Having watched the video for the first time helped me to consider that most of the time, teaching elements used in classroom do not represent the realities of the culturally Linguistic Diverse CLD student.

Murry (1996) suggested that the schools, curriculum, and CLD teachers do not recognize, build on, or value the students' cultural heritage. Limiting the teaching-learning process to merely linguistic aspects is a misconception. Students learn a second language as a necessary tool to successfully unfold in the new cultural environment. Students own cultural identity helps them perceive the novelties. Students see their learning reality through their frame of reference and behave according to this individual perception. The previous idea is a first step to understanding the cultural factor: stop treating all the same students. The CLD students handle a second language acquisition transition in dominant school culture and a new social environment. Parrish (2004) indicated that every English language learner experience what teachers do differently in the classroom (p. 1). Experiences, culture, expectations, strengths, and needs shape everything that happens in a lesson. Moreover, CLD language students need to adapt themselves to an entirely new environment. The way they perceive this new atmosphere is subjective, different, and cultural identity permeated their impressions. Sarrovar and Porter (2014) described culture as the deposit of knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes,

meanings, hierarchies, religion, timing, roles, spatial relations, and concepts of the universe acquired by a large group of people (p. 31).

CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) focuses on the point that materials employed to teach English have to be authentic, real- world simulation, and meaningful tasks. Also, those materials have to involve students' culture in which activities like dialogues, performances, and readings and characters of their immediate environment are present. When learners associate English with their culture, lessons are more meaningful and productive to learn the language.

Munandar et al. (2012) proposed some principles that constitute the basis of the intercultural approach. First at all, the need to establish a link between target culture and native culture and reflect both on the target and one's own culture. Second, interculturalism rather than biculturalism should serve as the goal of learning in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms. Learners may understand and appreciate their culture, the cultures of others, and study the language to share their community's cultural beliefs and practices with people whose values and behavior are diverse.

Intercultural competence is the ability both teachers and students develop to exchange information, messages, and experiences related to the native and foreign culture by using the foreign language. The speakers need to communicate and share their cultures, beliefs, ideas, customs, history, and speak about their national symbols, touristic places, geography, economy, and other topics. Also, the speakers must have deep knowledge about their countries and contexts and at the same time about the foreign code. Intercultural competence is how teachers and students interact to adapt themselves to the new cultural environment to facilitate their acculturation process. In summary, intercultural competence is a matter of continuing to shape

one's identity as a result of such interaction practices, but also a great way to understand the new cultural environment better.

Teachers are central mediators in what and how students learn in their classrooms. Therefore, this project aims to sensitize teachers about the use of cultural elements, considering not only the target culture, but also native culture to offer adjustable tools to the needs of different CLD students. This project consists of the design of two different CLD workshops based on diverse cultural elements. These workshops offer ways to approach the culture and acculturation process of students while improving linguistic aspects such as grammar, semantics, syntactic, and pragmatics.

The language's teacher roll implies recognizing the academic and the academic and social student's expectations. These workshops are a clear example of how to approach cultural identities without using the English speaker world's usual cultural topics. The workshops also offer a voice to the student who will feel that their world reference contributes to the objectives of their English learning process. At the same time, teachers can be aware of the significant impact of culture on the second language teaching-learning process.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Intercultural approaches in the EFL field provide a narrow scope to shape practices that allow students to develop cultural awareness and become competent and proficient at the same time (Chlopek, 2007). One of the main concepts considered in this project is intercultural education as the basis for designing teaching strategies that may contribute to attaining the goal of greater cultural awareness (Yang, 2017). The intercultural aspect of this project demands the understanding of culture and their teaching implication. According to Shapiro et al. (2014), the visible and tacit components of culture significantly impact our communicative behaviors and reactions to the behaviors of others (p. 10).

Marginson (2012) stated that intercultural education is an educational movement emphasizing justice, equity, and understanding diversity in democratic, multicultural societies. In this sense, intercultural education aims to provide the optimal environment for learning based on an understanding of the differential needs of culturally linguistically diverse (CLD) students (Melo, 2016).

Intercultural education includes a global aspect emphasizing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and responsibilities linked with perceiving and understanding the world as a single interconnected entity (Yang, 2017). Additionally, teachers and students must realize that it does not mean that the foreign language and culture are isolated from the native ones. In other words, Marginson (2012) affirmed that intercultural education prepares the learners to act as interpreters and mediators between different cultures.

As mentioned above, it is necessary to say that if the teacher creates and applies any didactic material to teach English, it has to involve the communicative function of the language, such as activities that allow students to practice communicative skills and interact through cooperative work (Chlopek, 2007). For that reason, Melo (2016) stated that student and teacher exchanges have shown that new contexts require more intercultural understanding and more interaction, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills.

Intercultural competence refers to the ability of an expert to work in international and multicultural working environments to promote learning between different cultures and to relate one's contribution to collaboration in such working communities (Marginson, 2012). Considering the previous idea, the intercultural competence has become an integral part of professional knowledge, identity, and overall competence in different professional areas.

In this way, intercultural competence is defined as the ability that both teachers and students develop to exchange information, messages, and experiences related to the native and foreign culture by using the foreign language (Sinicrope et al., 2007). Therefore, students expect opportunities to share their cultures facts, beliefs, ideas, customs, and history by speaking about their national symbols, tourist places, geography, economy, etc. In the same way, the speakers must have deep knowledge about their countries and contexts and at the same time about the foreign code. Intercultural competence may also be seen as the stances assumed by teachers and students when interacting (Ospina & Medina, 2020) with intercultural competence continuing to shape one's identity due to such interactive practices (Sinicrope et al., 2007).

The Intercultural Approach

The role of English in intercultural communication entails an understanding of the linguistic and cultural variations of English users. Intercultural approaches to English language teaching (ELT) promote awareness of the source culture, the target culture, and the international target culture (Munandar & Ulwiyah, (2012). The intercultural approach involves critical thinking about globalization in terms of language and all the human development fields. Intercultural communication considers that language and culture are integrated (Li, 2017). Such an approach does not transmit information about culture; instead, it focuses on raising awareness of culture in the lived experience of the learners and people from the target language culture and other cultures present in a classroom or community (Irimia, 2012), meaning that the intercultural approach extends beyond superficial knowledge and isolated knowledge of native and foreign culture and language. Still, this approach promotes going deep in the linguistic and cultural world of teaching and learning a foreign code (Walz, 2008). In other words, a critical contribution to an intercultural perspective is the inclusion of vocabulary that helps learners talk about cultural diversity. This can include human rights, equality, dignity, gender, prejudice, stereotype, racism, ethnic minority (Hornsby, 2014).

An intercultural approach to English language teaching (ELT) maintains that culture-focused learning is the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures (Chlopek, 2007). Chlopek (2007) indicated that intercultural approaches to ELT foster the development of a sphere of interculturality. Therefore, English learners link their cultural beliefs and practices to those of target culture and international target culture. The

intercultural aspect of the language is a matter of native and foreign identity using a foreign language to communicate (Bennett, 2017).

Munandar et al. (2012) stated how the local references help students to interact more spontaneously. The extensive use of local references in the locally-produced English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks for Indonesian high schools, not only encourages the learners to reflect on and relate their cultures to the cultures of others, but it also helps them to readily adopt the language material and adapt cultural components to their realistic context of language use and language learning (Munandar et al., 2012, p. 35). Using any materials to teach and learn is useful and meaningful if they are near the local context where the students learn and belong to (Mu Kuo & Chieh Lai, 2003). Mu Kuo and Chieh Lai (2003) suggested that if the materials can associate student's native and foreign cultural issues, they will develop logical, linguistic, and cultural competencies in a better way. Therefore, the students will be aware of what happens all over the world recognizing cultural differences and ignoring stereotypes (Mu Kuo & Chieh Lai, 2003, p. 6).

Paige et al. (2003) and Munandar and Ulwiyah (2012) proposed some principles that constitute the basis of the intercultural approach; the first one is the need to establish a link between the target culture and the naïve culture (p. 42). It can be assumed from this that interculturalism rather than biculturalism should serve as the goal of learning in EFL classrooms. It is perhaps through cultural support and understanding that the diversities of languages can be resolved and stress students feel can be reduced (Mu Kuo & Chieh Lai, 2003). In other words, learners may understand and appreciate their culture and the cultures of others and study the language to be able to share their cultural beliefs and practices with people whose values and behavior differ.

Sociocultural Dimension

The intercultural approach and competence engage ESL students in an interactive process by exploring their own and each other's socio-cultural backgrounds. Damen (1987) remarked that the term sociocultural communication has had different names, such as cross-cultural communication, transcultural communication, interracial communication, international communication, and contracultural communication. As Mu Kuo and Chieh Lai (2003) mentioned cultural knowledge is crucial in achieving linguistic proficiency (p. 5). Consequently, it is necessary to discuss the powerful way in which these socio-cultural processes take place. Herrera and Murry (2016) indicated that CLD students confront various cultural and psychosocial challenges, and they will also develop through a series of socio-cultural processes (p. 17). As a result, the outcomes of these sociocultural processes influence the students' performance in the classroom.

Socio-cultural activities help ESL learners, as well as teachers, develop intercultural competences. One way to better understand the development of intercultural competences in an ESL classroom is to consider the definition of acculturation. According to Parrish (2006), acculturation is the ability for minority cultures to adapt to the dominant culture. This process involves an understanding of the beliefs, emotions, and behaviors of the new culture (p. 3). Therefore, teachers should be aware of the different needs of CLD students and how they progress, not only in acculturation, but also in the development of intercultural competence. Herrera and Murry (2016) noted that "many educators have not been prepared to understand the importance of the intercultural dynamics that occur within schools and between the school and its community" (p. 17). It can be assumed from this, that teachers may fail to consider students' socio-cultural processes when delivering instruction.

Additionally, without an understanding of acculturation, processes can limit the demonstration of the link between language and culture to ESL learners. Damen (1987) indicated that learners need to be shown how culture constructs and negotiates meaning through their native culture and the target one. Knutson (2006) further explained that cultural awareness and cross-cultural awareness involves discovering and understanding one's own culturally conditioned behavior and thinking as well as the patterns of others. Therefore, Parrish (2006) pointed out that the acculturation process moves learners from a state of no understanding of, or even hostility to, a new culture to near total understanding, from monoculturalism, to bi- or multi-culturalism (p. 3). In the same way, Zhang (2007) argued that having the proper awareness of cross-cultural communication is the first step to achieve harmony and success of intercultural communication.

Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach defines language as "a system for the expression of meaning; primary function-interaction and communication" (Brown, 2007, p. 36). Teaching and learning a foreign language are more than knowing grammatical and technical knowledge about the new code. Krashen (2009) stated that it is essential to conceive language, not like an isolated item of human survival; language is not only to interchange words or sentences to get information about something. Accordingly, CLT goes beyond grammatical and discourse elements in communication. Brown (2007) noted that "we are exploring pedagogical means for real-life communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency and not just the accuracy that once consumed our

predecessors" (p. 45). Thus, teaching and learning processes may focus on linguistic aspects and pragmatic ones.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is one of the methods featured in developing learner's communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). According to Dos Santos (2019) the CLT approach consistently encourages both teachers and students to seek teaching and learning materials tools from their current living communities' environments and societies. In this model, "teachers…create visual based teaching and learning materials using the student's communities as the source allowing students to share and chat about their daily lives with their classmates" (Dos Santos, 2019). Subsequently, Brown (2007) described how communicative activities facilitate the learning process. He said that teachers must be concerned with facilitating lifelong language teaching among their students, not just with the immediate classroom task, but also as partners in a cooperative venture (p. 45). Thus, in 1995, Vygotsky mentioned that "the humans are social beings by nature" (p. 45). This means that it is difficult for students to learn English in a meaningful way if they do not share their knowledge, opinions, experiences, beliefs, likes and dislikes with the other educative actors.

Nunan (2003) also suggested that teachers and learners interact continuously to negotiate and build meanings, particularly in a multicultural classroom (p. 35). Personal experiences help learners since some emotional and affective factors of the students (risk, taking, less anxiety, self-esteem, confidence, willingness to learn and communicate) make up part of the language lessons (Skehan, 1989).

Brown (2007) noted that "much more spontaneity is present in communicative classrooms because students are encouraged to deal with unrehearsed situations under the guidance, but no control, of the teacher" (p. 47). In other words, students in a CLT class are

active participants; they can propose, change, determine, make questions, and contribute with their ideas in the preparation, development, and assessment of a lesson. Meanwhile, the teachers facilitate and guide students using teaching strategies that motivate them to talk, show points of view, and personal experiences (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, according to Harmer (1989) "teachers and students constitute a team in teaching and learning English" (p. 42). One example of spontaneous opportunity is free conversations and using everyday settings, and those strategies may help students feel identified with classroom situations and use the language to express their points of view. Besides, as Richard and Rodgers (2001) pointed out, the interactive and active participation of teachers and students is promoted in a communicative class (p. 16), and using materials that involve functional use of the language help learners learn more realistically. In other words, the CLT focuses on materials that are employed to teach English must be characterized by authentic, real-world simulation and meaningful tasks.

Moreover, Brown (2007) affirmed that "CLT is laden with issues of authenticity, acceptability, and adaptability" (p. 45). Didactic materials need to be adapted according to the students' needs, situations, preferences, ages, and language levels. Also, these materials need to be designed in terms of visual, linguistic, and cultural impact. For instance, more formal and informal education institutions employ textbooks, but those are written by foreign authors taking into account foreign and not local issues (Brown, 2007)

Bearing in mind that CLT promotes communication and not transmission, intrinsic and not only extrinsic motivation, fluency and not accuracy, and interaction and not only individual work, it is also necessary to include concepts and aspects related to cooperative learning.

Cooperative Learning

Appreciating cultural differences can be focused on in cooperative learning. When students work together and help each other toward a particular task, they feel more positive and recognize differences as a way of enrichment. Brown (2007) discussed some of the characteristics of a cooperative classroom:

> In a cooperative classroom, the students and teachers work together to pursue goals and objectives. As students work together in pairs and groups, they share information and come to each other's aid. They are a team whose players must work together to achieve goals successfully. (p. 53)

Therefore, cooperative learning is a must in a multicultural classroom because it promotes the understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity as well as positive interpersonal relationships. Brown (2007) defined cooperative learning as one accurate way of "promoting intrinsic motivation, heightening self-esteem, creating caring and altruistic relationships, and lowering anxiety and prejudice" (p. 53). Consequently, cooperative learning contributes to achieving the goals of teaching and learning English and the linguistic objectives and the humanistic purposes of education.

Regarding the advantages of cooperating learning, Joritz-Nakagawa (2006) made a narrative study with cooperative learning (CL) implementation in a university-level English reading course in Japan. Nakagawa (2006) found that the students' learning with CL in her class seemed to have yielded positive outcomes (p. 65). In the same way, Nakagawa (2006) students commented that students gained a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence through their group project; as one student voiced, "I didn't think we could do it, but we did! I'm so proud! (Nakagawa 2006). One of the important aspects Nakagawa (2006) perceived from the students

was that they like it because its structure with CL which created opportunities for them to communicate and interact with one another in class, which gave them enjoyable experiences (p.151). As an illustration, cooperative learning opens the door to interaction, motivation, teamwork, and so on. Likewise, intercultural approaches to learning offer opportunities to involve an individual's reality in the classroom, allowing them to compare it with other facts.

Employing the cooperative learning theory help students gain theoretical knowledge about the content in their area of study through readings, discussions, CL grouping experiences, and practical understanding of the use of different group work structures, such as Jigsaw, roundtable, and group investigation. Johnson et al. (1990) asserted that "what we know about effective instruction indicates that cooperative learning should be used when we want students to learn more, like school better, like each other better, like themselves better, and learn more effective social skills" (p. 5). By way of explanation, cooperative learning opens the door to interaction, motivation, teamwork, and so on. Oxford (1997) indicated that cooperative learning is more effective in promoting intrinsic motivation and task achievement, generating higher thinking skills, improving attitudes toward the subject (p. 445). In the same way, intercultural approaches to learning offer opportunities to involve an individual's reality in the classroom, allowing them to compare it with other facts.

The Importance of Creating Didactic Materials

It is necessary to create and offer students and teachers other elements to explore and use different possibilities to teach English through different didactic materials. Núñez et al. (2004) explained that teachers can create teacher tools, but also design those strategies based on their student's needs:

> Most EFL AND ESL teachers are creative professionals who have the potential to explore their creativity and embark upon the fascinating task of developing their didactic material based on their teaching experience, but also on their expertise on the cognitive and learning process needs of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) students. Indeed, this task should not be confined to text developers exclusively since there is not such a complete textbook that fulfills our learners and teachers' expectations. (p. 6)

Designing and creating didactic materials is a way to complement and support the teaching and learning processes. Also, it is the opportunity for teachers to explore their imagination and practice their didactic and pedagogical knowledge to the service of more innovative education to include cultural factors that help students value their own and others' cultural manifestations (Núñez et al., 2009).

In this sense, Núñez et al. (2009) stated that "It is by doing things that we learn" (p. 16). All teachers can generate innovation and become creative and commit to producing learning materials using socio-cultural aspects. This project is an invitation for teachers to propose and design new resources and transform their pedagogical practices because it is worth and self-rewarding creating your teaching materials. (Núñez et al., 2009). It enables teachers to contribute to the following teaching and learning objectives:

- To provide language learners with meaningful, high-quality input so that it facilitates learners' language learning targets.
- To guide students towards the importance of recognizing their culture, work on stereotypes and value the cultural manifestations of others.
- To consider real-life situations in learning strategies and instructional content to facilitate the gradual development of a balanced set of English skills.

- To establish how the effectiveness of instructional material will be evaluated. (Núñez et al., 2009, p. 9)

It seems important that teacher should arrange different teaching materials in order to help students remember their language they learned in foreign language teaching (Seven, 2006). Therefore, adapting teaching materials to students' needs is the best way to connect them to the real world as the teacher knows what is the best and what are those linguistic aspect students need to improve. Considering the previous idea, Orjuela and Torres (1992) affirmed that:

> Learning is a wise process; therefore, the human being needs to receive more sensations to obtain exact and rich perceptions. Meanwhile, the teacher's word only offers auditory perceptions, and the didactic materials offer a lot of visual, auditory, and tactile sensations to the student, facilitating the learning process. (p. 32)

As a result, the use of didactic materials helps language students to learn easily, especially when those materials provide a natural learning environment and help students to take part of the process. Didactic materials favor and develop the learners' imagination, attention, and concentration because they like surprises and learn by fun. Also, they enjoy when knowledge is related to their realities (Orjuela & Torres, 1992). Finally, didactic materials are essential tools for students to take part in the learning and teaching processes. The creation of didactic materials has some implication as Low (2008) described:

> Designing appropriated material is not a science: it is a strange mixture of imagination, insight, and analytical reasoning. This, in turn, includes the adaptation and or creation of a learning teaching exercise, a task, an activity, a lesson, a unit, or a module composed by one or two units. (p. 32)

Commitment and passion for instruction motivate teachers to create and look for the best of the students, which involves updating your classes to their socio-cultural environments. By using didactic materials teacher can increase interest and motivation, not only to the lessons, but also to participation. It is clear that teacher can enrich their classes through the use of their own tools.

What Does Didactic Materials Mean?

Tomlinson (2010) defined the concept of didactic materials as "the use of various resources to teach language learners". (p.7) Also, Tomlinson (2010) indicated that didactic materials can be adapted and adjusted to improve them or make them more suitable for a particular type of learner (p. 42). Didactic materials are tools that teacher employ to accommodate their lessons to student's needs. When teachers have the best intentions to make classes more effective, they find techniques and think about resources to have positive results in their lessons. According to Bustos (1989 as cited in Hernández & Mariño, 1997):

> One of the most interesting lines in the teaching area is the one that elaborates and products material with high didactic quality. Those materials are proposals about the ways to teach and learn. These can be textbooks, videos, sheets, lab elements, specific teaching techniques, and so on. These tools must look for new criteria that lead to the production of updated and new materials for an education with a better level of quality and consequently promote a better life quality. (p. 61)

In other words, to accommodate the lessons and offer different ways to learn for all students, teachers have to select, adapt, or create materials taking into consideration the objectives and students' learning styles. Herrera and Murry (2016) affirmed that CLD students success depends

on educators' responses to the teaching and learning implications of the four interrelated dimensions of the CLD student's biography (socio-cultural, cognitive, academic, and linguistic) (p. 23). Accordingly, innovation is essential, especially when students adjust to a new or non-native culture because the differences between cultures are evident. Thus, teachers should find engaging and meaningful activities and materials to help students adapt, answer questions, and understand the actions of others in the new culture. Lastly, it is important to clarify as Orjuela and Torres (1992) indicated, "the didactic materials are to complement and not to supplant the teacher, the text or the learning activity" (p. 19). That is to say that those materials need a guide or somebody who control their use and establish instructions.

How to Design Didactic Materials

This project focuses on the design of socio-cultural resources to teach and learn English bearing in mind the conception that education should be inclusive rather than exclusive. It is important to understand that designing didactic materials involves to include the students' age, likes, dislikes, preferences, personal experiences, learning styles, backgrounds, and immediate realities. In the same way, creativity is an essential item in designing didactic materials. Augusto-Navarro (2015) stated that "the creative development process of the learner must be guided respecting the expression freedom, stimulating the effectiveness and originality through the use of different materials" (p. 18). Didactic materials should propose creative and dynamic exercises that allow students and teachers to reflect the diversity in the school, community, and around the world. According to Herrera and Murry (2016) designing socio-cultural teaching strategies is a positive way to support CLD students and their families (p. 52). In line with the previous appreciation, teaching materials play a central role in teaching and learning as part of language

acquisition. Consequently, it is necessary that teachers become aware of why to create and develop different techniques to facilitate their professions and help students in their individual struggles.

Shapiro et al. (2014) indicated that creativity and innovation have a high value in education in terms of originality because teachers and students must challenge themselves to explore various strategies to achieve their teaching and learning goals (p. 14). Therefore, students should be able to suggest learning strategies. Therefore, language classes should provide voice to the students to propose techniques or other resources.

Finally, the role of the language teacher implies recognizing the academic and the social student's expectations. Generally, CLD learners have an urge to learn the language to improve their quality of life; they can seldom take the time to analyze the process they are going through and the implications of being part of a new culture. Therefore, the teacher must become aware of the experiences and address topics and classes that help them adjust satisfactorily to the new environment while still valuing their own cultural identity.

Chapter Three: Project design

In this chapter, I propose to describe the basis of designing two workshops as educational methods that go beyond the traditional to enhance the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learning experience and allow teachers and students to establish a real contact between the foreign language and their personal experiences. These workshops will allow teachers to involve students' realities, cultures, and life conditions considering a cultural perspective. According to Herrera and Murry (2016), second or foreign language immersion is similar to two-way immersion because students are immersed in a second language as the medium of academic instruction and social interaction (p. 124). In other words, the cultural competence is quite important in the material employed, not only to learn English, but also to teach any foreign language.

The intercultural aspect is a way to learn English and, at the same time, to know about the native culture and context (Taga, 1999). The American anthropologist, Sapir (1921), indicated that culture is language dependent on account of conveying the implicit meaning and inherited patterns of life. It is essential that teachers recognize that a language class is also a matter of identity and cultural values.

In this way, these workshops are an example and an opportunity to think about didactic and cultural materials designed for teachers in which the contact, interaction, and interculturality enhance the learning experience and allow learners to reach the language goals. Brown (2007) indicated that teaching language techniques is designed to engage learners in the pragmatic,

authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. The workshops intent is to demonstrate to teachers that learners become more excited and comfortable when learning English using their previous knowledge about cultural aspects and connecting it to the target language. The main purpose of these workshops is to offer some alternatives of active learning because the workshops involve a combination of activities taken from the students' reality which involve dynamic participation in the learning experience and building knowledge. This project is an academic opportunity for teachers to study and explore different pedagogical strategies and generate new ideas based on the imagination and creativity.

Herrera and Murry (2016) indicated that sociocultural dimensions encompass the students' heritage, culture, family interactions, and more. Highly effective teachers take the time to understand and build on student's experiences associated with this dimension (p. 11). In other words, when teachers provide intercultural and communicative resources, this helps students to improve their learning and academic abilities. Additionally, those resources contribute to youth development by providing options for learning about their cultural aspects, but especially because those resources were designed considering students' levels and needs.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) stated that one of the major responsibilities of the teachers whose role is a facilitator in the Communicative Language teaching (CLT) class is to create classroom environments conducive for the promotion of communication. Most of the time, students' participation and interaction in class is modest, and then classrooms can be spaces in which students feel the motivation or the necessity to use the language in variety of settings, including culture and identity facts that students identify as their own, helping them to become more proficient in social interactions and language skills.

Scarcella (1990) defined acculturation as “the ability for minority cultures to adapt to the dominant culture, which involves an understanding of the beliefs, emotions, and behaviors of the new culture, without letting go of the first culture” (p. 3). These workshops allow self-recognition of individual cultural aspects; the activities allow students to identify aspects of their culture as a way to contrasts them with the new one.

Parrish (2004) suggested that learners need meaningful and authentic opportunities to use language in order to acquire languages; teachers can help students to learn beyond the classroom and to become active members of their communities. These workshops will include topics of the cultural adjustment list proposed by Parrish (2004), such as country of origin, reasons for learning English, education and level of literacy in first language, previous exposure to English and other languages, experiences living in another country, and status of cultural group. Through these workshops, teachers will be able to use a reference on how to involve the communicative language teaching approach in CLD classrooms, explore their own creativity, and help students to adapt themselves to the new culture while understanding their learner’s life circumstances.

Chapter Four: Final Project

In this chapter, I propose to describe the basis of designing two workshops as educational methods that go beyond the traditional to enhance the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learning experience and allow teachers and students to establish a real contact between the foreign language and their personal experiences. These workshops will allow teachers to involve students' realities, cultures, and life conditions considering a cultural perspective. According to Herrera and Murry (2016), second or foreign language immersion is similar to two-way immersion because students are immersed in a second language as the medium of academic instruction and social interaction (p. 124). In other words, the cultural competence is quite important in the material employed, not only to learn English, but also to teach any foreign language.

The intercultural aspect is a way to learn English and, at the same time, to know about the native culture and context (Taga, 1999). The American anthropologist, Sapir (1921), indicated that culture is language dependent on account of conveying the implicit meaning and inherited patterns of life. It is essential that teachers recognize that a language class is also a matter of identity and cultural values.

In this way, these workshops are an example and an opportunity to think about didactic and cultural materials designed for teachers in which the contact, interaction, and interculturality enhance the learning experience and allow learners to reach the language goals. Brown (2007) indicated that teaching language techniques is designed to engage learners in the pragmatic,

authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. The workshops intent is to demonstrate to teachers that learners become more excited and comfortable when learning English using their previous knowledge about cultural aspects and connecting it to the target language. The main purpose of these workshops is to offer some alternatives of active learning because the workshops involve a combination of activities taken from the students' reality which involve dynamic participation in the learning experience and building knowledge. This project is an academic opportunity for teachers to study and explore different pedagogical strategies and generate new ideas based on the imagination and creativity.

Herrera and Murry (2016) indicated that sociocultural dimensions encompass the students' heritage, culture, family interactions, and more. Highly effective teachers take the time to understand and build on student's experiences associated with this dimension (p. 11). In other words, when teachers provide intercultural and communicative resources, this helps students to improve their learning and academic abilities. Additionally, those resources contribute to youth development by providing options for learning about their cultural aspects, but especially because those resources were designed considering students' levels and needs.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) stated that one of the major responsibilities of the teachers whose role is a facilitator in the Communicative Language teaching (CLT) class is to create classroom environments conducive for the promotion of communication. Most of the time, students' participation and interaction in class is modest, and then classrooms can be spaces in which students feel the motivation or the necessity to use the language in variety of settings, including culture and identity facts that students identify as their own, helping them to become more proficient in social interactions and language skills.

Scarcella (1990) defined acculturation as “the ability for minority cultures to adapt to the dominant culture, which involves an understanding of the beliefs, emotions, and behaviors of the new culture, without letting go of the first culture” (p. 3). These workshops allow self-recognition of individual cultural aspects; the activities allow students to identify aspects of their culture as a way to contrasts them with the new one.

Parrish (2004) suggested that learners need meaningful and authentic opportunities to use language in order to acquire languages; teachers can help students to learn beyond the classroom and to become active members of their communities. These workshops will include topics of the cultural adjustment list proposed by Parrish (2004), such as country of origin, reasons for learning English, education and level of literacy in first language, previous exposure to English and other languages, experiences living in another country, and status of cultural group. Through these workshops, teachers will be able to use a reference on how to involve the communicative language teaching approach in CLD classrooms, explore their own creativity, and help students to adapt themselves to the new culture while understanding their learner’s life circumstances.

Introduction

Teaching English from an intercultural perspective is a teaching proposition to connect students' cultures, languages, and life experiences with what they learn. ESL students are usually part of teaching-learning environments where the language and culture do not closely correspond to the school's, which may be at a disadvantage in the learning process.

This project offers an opportunity to explore strategies to help students raise expectations and makes English learning a little bit more relevant. The main idea is to encourage and inspire the practice of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) to maximize learning opportunities. The implementation of these two workshops will help teachers gain knowledge of the cultures represented in classrooms and adapt lessons to reflect ways of communicating and learning that are familiar to the students. These projects may be a way to empower teachers and students intellectually, socially, and emotionally by using cultural referents to impart knowledge and improve language skills.

Workshop 1

Culture plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information but also in shaping people's thinking. This workshop offers access to cultural traditions worldwide related to a common topic for students from all cultures: birthday celebrations. The workshop focuses on the reality of the language and cultural learning to make classes more contextual and relevant. It contains stories, videos as effective sources of introducing various details of diversity and cultural facts related to birthday celebrations because understanding and embracing cultural differences are a great way to open up to a whole world of experiences. The activities try to involve the elements proposed by Deardorff (2006) for individuals to achieve intercultural competence: (a) requisite attitudes, which consist of respect (valuing other cultures), openness (withholding judgment), and curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity), and (b) knowledge and comprehension, which consist of cultural self-awareness, deep understanding and knowledge of culture (including contexts, role, and impact of culture and others' worldviews), culture-specific information, and sociolinguistic awareness.

Figure 4.1: Workshop Benefits.

Activity 1: Identity

The first page describes the general topic and benefits offered by the workshop application. It is essential to list the primary purpose of the activities and their benefits so that the teacher can identify their impact. The short description allows the teacher to realize that the workshop involves language and culture simultaneously, which should be taught simultaneously and at all levels of learning according to the project's primary purpose.

ESL teachers usually work with students from a variety of backgrounds and cultures present in their classrooms. According to Yang (2017) in today's “globalized village,” it is essential for TESOL teachers to develop intercultural identity. The central point focuses on identity dynamically developed and constructed in the intercultural context or environment.

This essential marking activity allows teachers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity in the classroom environment. Students feel more comfortable and confident when they realize their personal experience and knowledge are significant in the class topic. Depending on their levels, students write down, comment or discuss culturally significant birthday traditions about their country.

Figure 4.2: Activity 1

Activity 2: Useful Words

In this activity, students contact the class topic and become exposed to the wide variety of vocabulary needed to talk about it. This is a starting point in which students begin to make explicit comparisons between cultures and identify familiar elements. In this activity, aspects of many other cultures were considered. The vocabulary is broad and inclusive so that students can identify traditional aspects of their culture in the vocabulary words to share their personal experiences. The images are helpful for students to identify and describe using a foreign language. According to Nekrasova-Beker et al. (2017) word lists can facilitate the process of identifying relevant vocabulary and, therefore, can be useful for instructors and material developers, but teachers need to ensure that the vocabulary included in the list is not only representative of the subject domain, but also of the real life circumstances of the students.

Figure 4.3: Activity 2

Activity 3: Dispelling Myths

Cultural facts are an excellent way to motivate students to learn about the culture of the language they are studying. Students listen to people from different countries confirming or denying birthday traditions in their countries. The activity also serves to dispel myths and popular stereotypes, supporting students to realize that there is much more to culture than what they see on television. This activity also helps students to develop listening and speaking skills since they need to be attentive to the pronunciation of the words. Kubota (2018) indicated that in instructional contexts, stereotypes, and essentialism can affect the ways in which learners and teachers are perceived by others. Based on that, it is necessary create spaces to dispel the way students and the academic community adopt ideas or stereotypes on social or cultural groups.

Figure 4.4: Activity 3

Activity 4: Traveling Around the World

This activity encourages cultural awareness. As DeCapua (2018) mentioned, students need to become aware of how deep, underlying cultural factors affect people's behaviors (and, to some extent, they need to learn what these factors are). ESL classrooms should offer opportunities for students to understand cultures other than their own. Students develop cultural sensitivity through being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist. Students get to hear people and traditions from many other countries where English is the official language—developing an understanding of other cultures or cultural awareness while students have meaningful interactions.

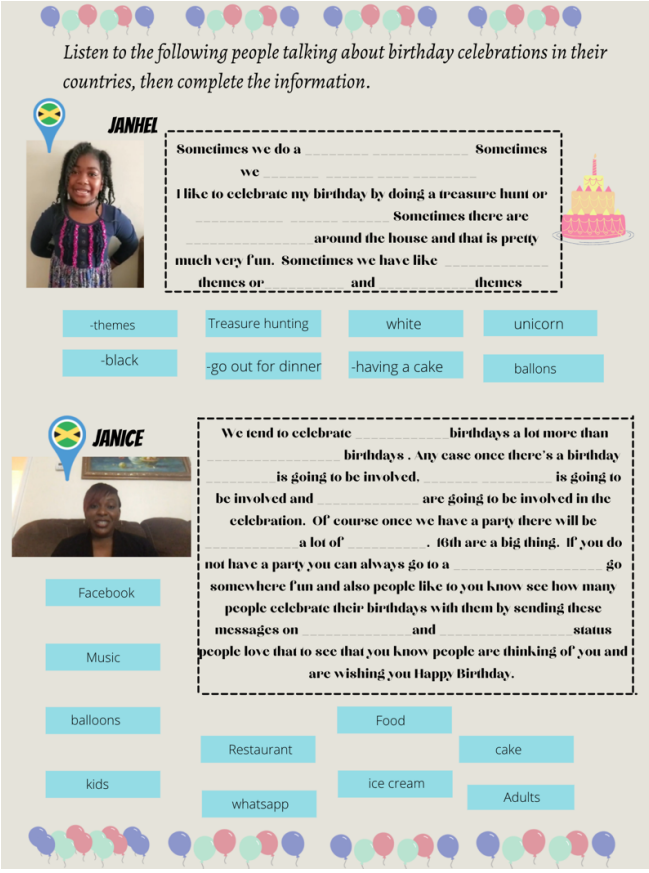


Figure 4.5: Activity 4

Activity 5: Cultural misunderstandings

This activity teaches students to think from multiple cultural perspectives and increase their cultural awareness. Involving a cultural misunderstanding in real-life resulted in confusion, frustration, and even anger between the people involved (Shumin, 1997). Students can discuss how and why the communication broke down by looking at the situation from each person's point of view. DeCapua (2018) suggested that In the ESL classroom, students experience new ways of interpreting and understanding the world. Considering the previous idea, this activity is designed to help students become aware of their own and the new behaviors, along with the underlying norms, beliefs, and values and the role of all these in cross-cultural (mis)communication.

Teachers can encourage the students to figure out a way to clear up the miscommunication using their knowledge about the various cultures. This activity is suitable for more advanced language learners. It requires students to be aware of their own culture. Moreover, they will need to have a depth of knowledge about the other cultures to make comparisons.

Using natural, spontaneous experiences with guests speaking English as a native or second language is very helpful for visual and auditory stimulation and linguistic and communicative learning styles. The students can develop speaking and listening skills since they have to hear the experiences. Students may feel motivated to talk about their personal experiences as well. One of the most critical elements of these activities is that students can enrich the topic through contributions about their experiences. At the same time, all the conversations that students maintain in the activities are spontaneous.

The idea of using incidents or short anecdotes of cross-cultural miscommunication is to ask students to analyze them so that students may understand what underlying norms, values, and beliefs contribute to the misunderstandings.

Figure 4.6: Activity 5

Workshop 2

This workshop is meant to involve the intercultural aspect of the language as well. The activities were designed and adapted according to the communicative component of the language. The following workshop is an alternative to help students recognize their cultural perspectives by developing self-awareness. Most of the activities have to do with the English learning experience to recognize that other individuals experience some of their feelings while learning and adapting to a new cultural environment. Once again, the idea is to support the intercultural component of the language since the sentences, the stories, and the situations embody topics where the native and foreign language experiences are joined. In workshop one students are exposed to many cultural differences, allowing them to recognize familiar elements like values, behaviors, and attitudes to better understand their acculturation process while interpreting others people's experiences.

Byram (1997) proposed some dimensions of intercultural competence: one's knowledge of the culture of the others, one's ability to interpret and relate to the culture in question, one's skills in discovering and interacting with the new culture, one's attitudes of curiosity and openness, as well as one's critical cultural awareness, based on that intercultural perspective continues, which are all part of the three following activities.

Transitional mindset: Activity One

This activity offers tangible examples of sentences used by English learners to describe their learning processes. Students can reflect on their learning process and cultural adaptation while comparing and interpreting some of the stories from people with various linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds. This is more of a reading and speaking activity that allows, not only a cultural exploration, but also a reflection on informal conversations or comments made by English learning during a particular time. According to Morris-Adams (2016), shifting familiar topics is a great strategy to engage students in conversations, which is why this activity integrates real stories from real people.

Figure 4.7: Activity 1

Significant Stories: Activity 2

This activity consists of listening to short stories from people who overcame many of the fears and difficulties in learning English. Although they are still learning, they highlight the benefits of learning one of the most widely spoken languages the world offers. Motivation within a learning environment is fundamental, but it is even more so when students learn a second language and have various reasons: work, immersion, better opportunities, and migration.

Figure 4.8: Activity 2

Lifestyles: Activity 3

This activity offers the possibility to discuss and explore activities that are common but also vary around the world, such as education, food, transportation, leisure, and household tasks. The idea is to discover some different international habits to give students insight into how their new country's culture could change or affect their everyday life.

Depending on the communicative skill, teachers can decide if is important to provide descriptions, characteristics, destinations and other vocabulary words students can use along the activity. Once again, the main idea is to reinforce the respect and acceptance of "ways of being" that are not necessarily our own. As students from diverse cultures, they can offer contributions to new ways of thinking, new knowledge, and different experiences that can result.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Working on this project helped me better comprehend and appreciate the affective factors and socio-cultural challenges of learning a second language in the target culture. Students are not simply acquiring language; they are in the acquisition of a new culture. Understanding these factors allowed me to realize how ESL teachers can help the students in the transitional adjustment and academic success in a foreign context.

I reflected on my teaching practice, and I was not recognizing, building up, or even valuing the diversity of my ESL classrooms. I wanted to find out strategies and opportunities to make my students' identity and cultural heritage much more significant and stop treating my students all the same. It was pleasant to discover that students' cultural identity is an ally in language classes; teachers can expand the topics to more global, social areas while teaching the linguistic aspects.

Teachers are central mediators in what and how students learn in their classrooms. The role of the language teacher implies recognizing the academic and the social student's expectations. Generally, CLD learners are eager to learn the language to improve their quality of life; they can seldom take the time to analyze the process they are going through and the implications of being part of a new culture. Therefore, the teacher must become aware of the experiences and address topics and classes that help them adjust satisfactorily to the new environment while still valuing their own cultural identity. Recognizing the value of different cultural identities can be approached in many different ways in the classroom.

I enjoyed exploring my skill to design didactic materials and contemplate strategies to enhance the results of the language process and provide a voice to the students through those activities. Many of them share the same academic intentions and the exact reasons for learning English. Consequently, I realized that allowing them to talk about these aspects in common while learning may also help them adapt quickly.

As soon as I was aware of the significant impact of culture on second language learning, I quickly recognized that experiencing differences in values and behaviors in the new culture may make students feel anxious. Nervous students could also mean unmotivated or indifferent. However, my role as a teacher is fundamental and creating academic spaces through teaching-learning techniques that expose students to the challenges that immersion in a new culture entails, benefit their adaptation processes, and improve the classroom environment.

Involving the experiences and stories of native speakers and speakers of English as a second language was great because the media now allows access to people from all over the world who love to practice English and are committed to be heard. Another magnificent aspect was clarifying some stereotypes and learning about other cultures through their testimonies. Interviewing people who have an intimate knowledge of second language learning was very enriching personally and professionally. They all have so much to offer, to transform my teaching practice and enhance my students' learning.

One of the main reasons for venturing to work on this topic was my desire to involve many more English-speaking countries because sometimes only the United States and the United Kingdom are cited. Therefore, I wanted to refer to some other countries and help my students reach the cultures and traditions of other English speakers worldwide. During this process, I learned to value the cultural and linguistic diversity that students bring to the classroom and use

this diversity to enrich all learning as an attractive strategy. I am sure that culturally responsive teachers must know how the brain uses culture to make sense of the world and support the processes of culture and acculturation.

ESL teaching involves socio-cultural aspects, anxiety, nerves, and fears that must be dealt with indirectly and using different activities. The classes may turn natural and spontaneous. The students do not even realize they are in the middle of a language class, but in a social environment where everyone is welcome and can advocate. English language classes are an opportunity for CLD students to perform successfully in the new reality.

Appendices

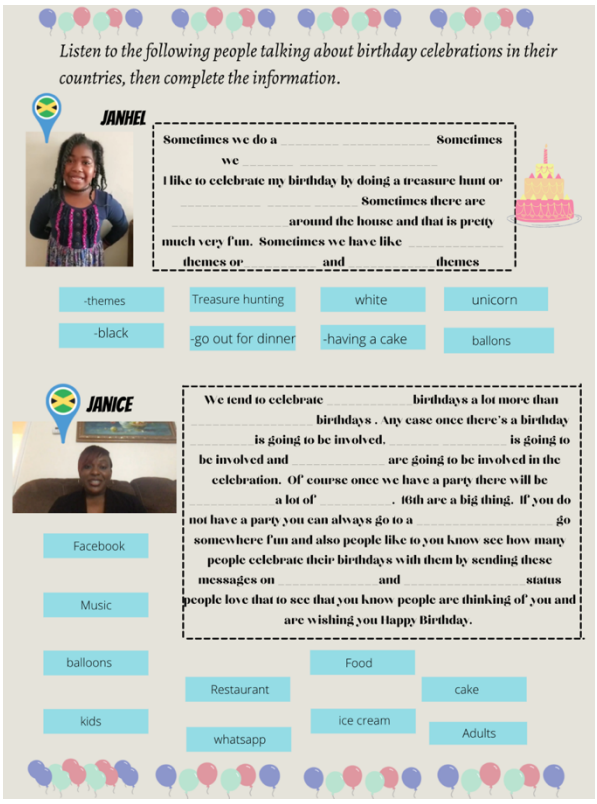
Appendix A: Slides

Slide # 1

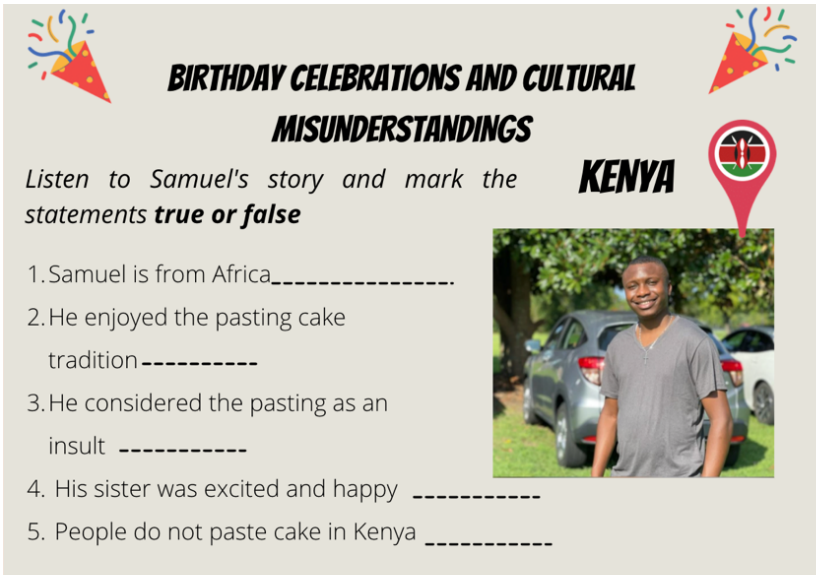
Slide # 2

Slide # 3

Slide # 4



Slide # 5



Slide # 6

Slide # 7

Slide # 8

LIFE STYLES
Education
Meals
Leisure
Transportation
Household tasks

Slide # 9

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